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ABSTRACT

A case writers workshop was sponsored by the Intercollegiate Case Clearing House to encourage case development by business faculty in the midwest. An afternoon discussion on teaching by the case method used a case called "The Vessal Apparel Shop" by Philip M. Van Auken. The 40 attendees were divided into two groups of 20; one group was instructed in a very directive manner. Participants were not told about the two different teaching approaches. Both classes were videotaped, and participants completed a questionnaire before the groups rejoined for discussion. A brief description is provided of the two teaching strategies, and information is presented on how class time was spent, how the class viewed its problem solving approach, how the class viewed the discussion, and subjective observations of teacher participants about the two approaches. (SW)

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An Experiment Comparing Directive vs. Non-Directive Cast Teaching

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I. Background and Introduction.

Last fall Bradley University hosted a case writers workshop sponsored by the Intercollegiate Case Clearing House and directed by John Wholihan to encourage case development by business faculty in the midwest. To complement the effort to develop case writing interest and skills one afternoon of the two day Workshop was devoted to discussing teaching by the case method. To facilitate that discussion the 40 attendees were divided into two groups of 20. The case chose for the session was one written for the Workshop, The Vessel Apparel Shop by Philip M. Van Auken.

To provoke debate and questioning one group was instructed in a very directive manner by John Ward of Loyola University of Chicago and the other group in a very non-directive manner by John Wholihan. Both case discussions lasted one hour; both had equal preparation and randomly assigned participants. The case was one focusing on general management issues to be most acceptable to the faculty from all fields of interest. Both case classes were video taped and both groups also completed a questionnaire (Appendix A) before the groups came together for a joint discussion of their experiences.

The two groups were not told that there was an intent to lead the classes in a prescribed and contrasting way. The format did encourage a sustaining discussion of case teaching.

The purpose of this presentation is several fold. First it is to share with those interested in case teaching an opportunity to reconsider the style and the results of their approach. Second, it is to offer to professors and schools the opportunity to order the tapes (3/4" color cassettes) for whatever purpose they wish. Third, it is to present the data that was available from the experience and the observations and conclusions of the two instructors. Finally, it is to allow

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those who may have been "students" in these tapes a chance to see themselves in action.

The presentation will begin with a brief description of the two teaching strategies: directive and non-directive. Three parts of each of the two tapes will be shown. First, segments from the beginning of each class illustrating how the discussions were set up by the instructors will be shown. Then, a few minutes from the middle of each session attempt to represent the tone, dialogue, and nature of participation of each group. Finally a few minutes from the end of each session show how the classes concluded. After the tapes we will present some of our observations and conclusions based on this experience comparing and contrasting the two instructional approaches.

II. A. The Directive Teaching Approach

The effort to approach the case discussion in a very directive way included two dimensions. First a framework for analysis was developed and explicity introduced to the class and followed chronologically by the instructor. The instructor purposely kept discussion on a particular topic and personally made the transitions from one stage to the next and determined the pace and time spent on each point. Second the instructor involved himself in the discussion actively by posing predetermined questions throughout the discussion and seeking responses directed to him.

Specifically the outline was the following:

- Describe the situation in terms of each of the strategic variables: product, location, market, distribution, competitive advantage, goals, market development, product development, pricing, purchasing, financing, administering;
- Bring these factors together into a statement of overall strategy;
- Evaluate the strategy and its separate parts;
- Identify key problems and opportunities;
- Rank them in importance;
- Pick the most important, solve, implement.

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The approach was outlined on the board and all comments were directed to the instructor and fitted to these categories. The instructor made an effort to call upon each before they spoke and to call on some who were not volunteers when participation was lacking or when it was desirable to bring in a new person. The instructor introduced the session in detail and provided a summary at the end of the class on what was accomplished and how.

II. B. The Non-Directive Teaching Approach

In the non-directive approach, every effort was made to stimulate the participants to find their own way through the case. In contrast to the directive approach a framework for analysis of the case was not explicitly stated. However, it should be noted that the leader did in fact, have a framework in mind and an outline in his notes in the event that the participants did not cooperate.

Lacking a prescribed structure the ideas, leads, and reactions of the students were used to build a structure for analysis. Consequently, two things were expected to happen nearly simultaneously. First, a modeling process was to evolve from the students on how to evaluate the case. Second, the data of the case were to be analyzed.

Several techniques were employed by the instructor. First, the objective was to record what was stated by the students without offering significant clarification or judgment of its relevance. Listing facts and listing steps in the analytical process were covered. Second, a conscious effort was made to respond to questions with questions. This was intended to stimulate both the modeling process and the analysis process.

Third, an effort was made to withdraw from the discussion as soon as other students began to participate. Fourth, to listen and record what seemed to be a consensus but avoid forcing such a consensus by taking sides or expressing a point of view. Fifth, encourage each participant to identify where they were in both

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the modeling and analysis process as their "answer" to the case. Although considerable time was spent on what might be classified as "back and fill" the participants themselves emerged with a framework for analysis as well as an analysis of the specific situation.

III. Observations

A. The Data

1. How class time was spent

An effort was made to log how much of the class time was spent on the different stages of "the rational problem solving approach" for each class session.

	%Time Spent	
Problem Solving Stage	Directive	Non-Directive
Developing Class Approach	25%	50%
Gathering Facts	40%	15%
Analysis of Facts	25%	10%
Recommended Solution	5%	25%
Implementation of Solution	5%	1%
	100%	100%

Most of the time developing a class approach in the directive group was on introduction by the instructor. It would be expected that the non-directive group would spend more time developing an approach on there own--especially as the group had never been together before. In addition the non-directive group kept going back and re-discussing the approach almost at regular 10 minute intervals but each time for decreasing lengths of time. Most of the frustration expressed in the non-directive class was toward the lack of consensus on approach and the repetitive drifts toward further discussion of approach. Some comments tried to cause the instructor--to no avail--to intercede and police this repetition.

A second indication is that the non-directive group preferred dealing with opinions or normative comments "how do we approach the case?" and "what do we recommend?" and proportionately fewer comments bringing forth facts.

2. How the class viewed its consideration.

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Each "student" rated how well he/she felt each stage of the problem-solving approach was resolved for their group. These comments were normalized for each group and what is recorded below represents relative degrees of group satisfaction/ disatisfaction with the resolution of each particular stage: "+" is relatively satisfied, "-" is relatively dissatisfied:

Problem Solving Stage	Relative Satisfaction Directive	Non-Directive
Problem Identification	+40%	+21%
Understand Facts	+10%	+ 5%
Consider Alternatives	+10%	+ 8%
Alternative Consequences	-27%	-21%
Best Solution	0	- 8%
Feasible Implementation	-33%	- 5%
	0	0

Interestingly, the directive group had stronger swings of satisfaction but, on the whole, the two groups felt relatively dissatisfied and satisfied on the same issues. Perhaps the limited time both groups spent on implementation is evidence of both groups' dissatisfaction there and perhaps the large time the directive group spent on facts and analysis led to their high degree of satisfaction with problem identification.

3. How the class viewed the discussion

Each "student" was also asked to rate their satisfaction with what took place, Again the following degrees of satisfaction are normalized to the particular group with "+" indicating satisfaction and "-" dissatisfaction.

Classroom Dynamics	Relative Satisfaction Directive	Non-Directive
Opportunity to express self	+43%	+43%
Benefit from comments of others	+46%	+14%
Digest each issue before moving on	-14%	+14%
Opportunity for disagreement	-39%	-32%
Involvement of instructor	-36%	-41%
	0	0

Again the general direction of the comments is similar under both approaches. The

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major differences in degree for others comments and in directries for digestation might be explained as follows. In the non-directive group the class by consensus and with its own leadership moved from one topic to another and might, therefore, be more satisfied than the group directed by the instructor from topic to topic. The non-directed group was not as satisfied by the comments of others. Perhaps because the nature of that group's comments to each other were normative/opinion while those in the directed group were more descriptive/factual would explain this difference.

B. Other Subjective Observations.

The instructors by studying the video tapes attempted to find other ways of comparing and contrasting the class sessions. They follow:

DIRECTIVE	NON-DIRECTIVE
. descriptive	. debative
. non-threatening	. some intimidated
. student - teacher dialogue	. student - student dialogue
. bland level of emotions	. more emotive (boredom and frustration)
. challenge facts	. challenge opinions
. accept framework	. challenge framework
. more people involved	. fewer people more dominant
. opinions expressed as questions	. opinions expressed as statements
. more personally risky statements	. more calling upon personal experience

These reactions to the tone and nature of participation in the two classes are personal, but they do suggest more scientific approaches are possible by developing operational measures of the terms and reviewing the video tapes in order to record the results. Further, these descriptors have their pros and cons and suggest what one might expect us "normal" when one uses either approach and they suggest that different approaches might be appropriate for different objectives and for different student groups at different times.

V. Conclusions.

While approaching the task of "teaching" peers was anxious, in retrospect we enjoyed and benefited from the experience for several reasons. We hope the

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following thoughts encourage others to study and to experiment with their case teaching approach.

Style: Innated or developed?

We both found our approaches to teaching by the case method mostly rooted in our personalities and in our habits. Forced to adopt a particular style and to analyze it had to the satisfying conclusion that one's style can be changed and that variety may lead to more personal fulfillment in teaching and, perhaps better results. We came to believe that case teaching style is much like leadership style. We develop an approach that is comfortable, predictable, and effective, but we know that leadership is an art that can be developed and should be varied as the situation warrants.

Case teaching development

We found that being taped, viewing oneself, and by studying the tapes of others leads to worthwhile thinking. One wonders about one's teaching approach rather than just accepting it. Further one wonders about what is "learning" and how it is brought about? Also we found ourselves gaining a deeper respect for the art of teaching by the case method and finding much more opportunity for personal preparation, development and effectiveness. Finally, we found that varying our style allows for more personal enjoyment of teaching. Whether it is "job enrichment" or merely "job rotation," we found it personally stimulating. We hope that the availability of these tapes to others may help share that enjoyment.

Desirable directiveness = f (? ? ? ? . . .)

Our final personal conclusion is that no one approach seems universally superior. It seems to depend on lots of factors:

- course objectives
- session objectives
- type of case
- level of students
- time available
- maybe even method of teacher/course evaluation

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The faculty who were "students" in the class session provided some general propositions:

- "More directive style is more appropriate for younger students and students with less business experience."
- "More non-directive style is more appropriate for MBA students and from advanced courses seeking to develop problem-solving skills."
- "More directive style is more appropriate earlier in course until alternative frameworks and class rapport is developed."
- "More directive style is more effective for faculty beginning to learn the case method of teaching."
- "More directive style is more effective in short class sessions (i.e. 50 minutes)."

These comments from others are only to be suggestive. Perhaps there is good opportunity to propose and measure more specific hypotheses:

- Directive style is more effective in learning problem definition and fact finding.
- Non-directive style is more effective in learning how to approach complex situations.
- Directive style will lead to better course evaluations by students, especially undergraduate students.
- Faculty who vary their style have more fun.

In sum, the notion argued here is that non-directive style as it is perceived to have been developed and implemented at the home of the case method back East is not necessarily always the "best." The style used should vary depending upon many factors. And that an effective teacher is one who developes the ability to use different approaches in different situations. Finally it appears that, personality of teacher and case aside, there are certain regular patterns to be expected in a case discussion. In addition to opportunities to test which approach is best when, there are opportunities to study video tapes to learn of classroom patterns such as "comic relief," "pensive pause," "cycles of focus," and demand for instructor involement.